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ABSTRACT

This position document is introduced by a fact sheet that lists the numbers of homeless people and the appropriations for various programs that assist homeless people. The executive summary discusses: (1) the plight of homeless children; (2) the passage of the McKinney Homeless Assistance Amendments of 1990 by the U.S. Congress; (3) services authorized and funds appropriated by the McKinney Amendments; (4) constraints on states' ability to use McKinney funds; (5) concerns regarding the proposed presidential budget for 1992; and (6) the increase in the number of homeless children attending school between 1987 and 1989. The bulk of the document consists of case studies that describe the hardships and triumphs of children and their families as they respond to the trauma of homelessness. The stories also describe the efforts of school personnel to help homeless students succeed. Case studies of children in Arkansas, Colorado, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, North Dakota, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Texas, and Washington are presented. Each case study is followed by a description of the ways in which the state would like to broaden its efforts to respond to the educational needs of homeless children. An appendix presents the text of the McKinney Homeless Assistance Amendments of 1990. (BC)

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Homeless, Not Hopeless: Ensuring Educational Opportunity for America's Homeless Children and Youth



A Position Document of the
National Association of State Coordinators
for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth
April 1991

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National Association of State Coordinators for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth

1991 Fact Sheet

Since the enactment of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act in 1987, state and local education agencies have taken significant strides to ensure that homeless children enroll, attend, and succeed in school. With the enactment of the McKinney Act Amendments of 1990, the nation is on the threshold of substantial changes that will increase the capacity of public schools to provide the services that homeless children need to be successful in school. Our nation must be mindful that, beyond all else, homeless children need homes. However, to the extent that we can meet the educational needs of homeless children, we can ensure that homeless children do not become homeless adults.

- Annual estimates of the number of homeless children in America range from 310,000 to 1.6 million.
- The U. S. Department of Education estimated that 273,000 school-age children experienced homelessness in 1989.
- In 1989, 28 percent of homeless school-age children did not attend school.
- As evidenced through the actions of many state and local education agencies, schools can play a significant role in meeting both the short- and long-term needs of homeless students, providing an environment that supports their physical, emotional, and social growth. Examples of such state and local actions include the provision of inservice training for school personnel; outreach efforts to identify and enroll homeless children and youth; the provision of counseling, tutoring, evaluation, and other direct services; and the coordination of community resources in response to the needs of homeless students. However, schools in many states continue to lack the resources to effectively ensure the school success of each homeless child.
- Through the McKinney Homeless Assistance Amendments of 1990 (Public Law 101-645), Congress expressed an intolerance of any barrier that prohibited the enrollment of homeless children and youth. Furthermore, through this legislation, Congress acknowledged that the true challenge was not simply to enroll homeless children, but to promote their success in school.
- Public Law 101-645 included an increase in the authorization for the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program from \$7.5 million to \$50 million. The new authorization would allow state education agencies to provide grants to local education agencies to provide the types of direct services needed to ensure the success of homeless students in public schools.
- The Fiscal Year 1991 appropriation for the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program was only \$7.2 million because the appropriation bill was passed prior to the enactment of the increased authorization. The low appropriation means that states, in 1991, will have only token dollars to respond to the educational needs of homeless children.
- The U. S. Department of Education awarded 17 grants to state and local education agencies from the Fiscal Year 1990 Exemplary Grants Program. Due to major structural changes in the new reauthorization bill, education projects in such states as North Dakota, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Washington are threatened with termination.
- The new authorization requires that local education agencies spend 50 percent of each grant on tutoring and remedial education services. As a result, many school districts will not be able to adequately use funds to provide necessary services to ensure that homeless children and youth can even get to school. The arbitrary determination of the distribution of funds may become a barrier to using the funds to best meet the needs of local homeless students.

Homeless, Not Hopeless:

Ensuring Educational Opportunity
for America's Homeless Children and Youth

A Position Document of the
National Association of State Coordinators
for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth

April 1991

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Homeless, Not Hopeless: Ensuring Educational Opportunity for America's Homeless Children and Youth

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Mission Statement

The National Association of State Coordinators for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (hereinafter referred to as the Association) is an association of state coordinators with responsibility for implementing Subtitle VII-B of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act related to the education of homeless children and youth. Membership is composed of state coordinators of projects for homeless children and youth in the fifty states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, and the Virgin Islands.

Since each child is a valuable resource, capable of learning and contributing positively to society, the Association has defined its mission as follows:

The National Association of State Coordinators for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth believes that in each state and territory coordinated efforts must be implemented to ensure that children and youth residing in temporary living situations receive equal access (equity) to appropriate educational services, while maintaining continuity and quality in instructional and non-instructional programming (excellence). Furthermore, the Association believes that strategies for effective instruction, comprehensive pupil services, and research must be developed, conducted, and disseminated.

The Association's mission is based on a belief in and a recognition of the importance of education as a force in abating the personal and social costs of poor and homeless children and youth. Furthermore, there is a recognition of our individual and collective responsibility to effect systemic changes which result in prevention and act as a deterrent over time.

The Association's positions emerge from these beliefs. Sustained effort to effect access, optimal achievement, and excellence for each homeless child and youth has become our individual and collective resolve.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*I like going to school. I can learn. Just 'cause you're homeless
don't mean you're hopeless.*

José, Age 12

The education of America's homeless children and youth continues to be one of our nation's most serious challenges. Annual estimates of the number of homeless children in America range from 310,000 to 1,600,000. The U. S. Department of Education estimated that 273,000 school-age children experienced homelessness in 1989. Because of our nation's lack of low-income housing and other issues such as unemployment, underemployment, domestic violence, divorce, child abuse, teen pregnancy, and substance abuse, hundreds of thousands of American children will find themselves living in shelters, cars, abandoned buildings, campgrounds, and in many other temporary settings not suitable for regular human habitation.

Many of the children who experience homelessness this year will lose more than their homes. Many will lose their furniture, their pets, their toys, and their playmates as they become uprooted in search of a permanent dwelling. Many will lose touch with the environment that provided them a sense of security, a sense of identity, and a sense of belonging. Many of these children will, this year, face pivotal points in their lives that will greatly influence the extent to which they accept or reject the values and norms of American society, and the extent to which they accept or reject the hope of a better future for themselves and their families.

Public Education Can Make a Difference

Beyond all else, homeless children need homes. However, to the extent that the nation can meet the educational needs of homeless children, we can help ensure that homeless children do not become homeless adults. Public education can play a significant role in meeting both the long- and short-term needs of homeless children and youth, providing an environment that supports their physical, social, and emotional growth.

Over the past three years, state departments of education have used McKinney Act resources to dramatically improve access to appropriate education for thousands of homeless children and youth. Many states, such as Alaska, Arkansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nevada, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont, and the District of Columbia, have provided training for school personnel to help them become aware of and sensitive to the needs of homeless children and youth. States such as Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Illinois, Kentucky, Montana, Nebraska, Pennsylvania, and Texas have encouraged local outreach efforts to identify and enroll homeless children and youth. Several states, including Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Kansas, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Nevada, New Jersey, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and the District of Columbia, have used McKinney funds or other resources in pilot projects that provide counseling, transportation, tutoring, evaluation and other direct services to homeless students. Many states, such as Alaska, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Maine, Montana, Nebraska, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, Utah, and Washington, have made extensive efforts to improve the coordination between school districts and other community agencies in response to the needs of homeless children and youth. These actions have resulted in meaningful school experiences that may change the lives of thousands of homeless children and youth.

Despite these efforts, today, there are homeless children who are turned away from schoolhouse doors because they do not have the school records, immunizations, guardianship papers, or other documentation required by the local school district for enrollment. Today, there are still homeless students who do not attend school regularly because they do not have transportation to school, or because they have health needs that are not being appropriately addressed. Today, there are still homeless students who are being enrolled only to fail, to dropout, to be expelled, or to otherwise not benefit from schooling because the school does not provide the resources (e.g., counseling, tutoring, social work services, or evaluation) needed to respond to pressing needs and ensure the students' success in school.

The successes of the past few years can be stepping stones to greater successes for larger numbers of homeless children. Public schools, with the support of state departments of education, can continue to make an important difference in the lives of America's homeless children and youth. This document describes some of the ways in which the nation's systems of public education can be influenced to broaden the successes of the recent past and improve access to a much more promising future for hundreds of thousands of homeless children and youth.

Congress Passes McKinney Amendments of 1990

Recently, Congress took a major step toward improving the education of America's homeless children. In November of 1990, Congress approved the McKinney Homeless Assistance Amendments of 1990 (Public Law 101-645). In this legislation, Congress expressed an intolerance of any barrier that prohibited the enrollment of homeless children and youth. Furthermore, through this legislation, Congress acknowledged that the true challenge was not simply to enroll homeless children, but to promote their success in public school.

Specifically, the McKinney Amendments require state departments of education to look beyond residency issues toward other issues that are keeping homeless children and youth out of school. States must now review and revise all policies, practices, laws, and regulations that may act as a barrier to the enrollment, attendance, or success in school of homeless children and youth. Also, states must assume a leadership role in ensuring that local education agencies review and revise policies and procedures that may similarly impede the access of homeless children to a free and appropriate public education.

Direct Services Authorized

Of critical importance, Congress acknowledged the value of providing direct services to homeless students through McKinney Act funds. Homeless children and youth can learn and be successful in school. However, homeless students sometimes require educational and support services to increase the likelihood of their success in school. Such services may not be available or adequate in some school districts. Previously, states were not allowed to use McKinney funds for direct services (beyond pilot projects). The McKinney Amendments now clearly state that funds from the Act can be used to provide an array of educational and support services in response to the needs of homeless students. For instance, schools may use the funds to provide before-school and after-school programs, tutoring programs, referrals for medical and mental health services, pre-school programs, parent education, counseling, social work services, expedited evaluation services, and other services that may not otherwise have been provided by the public school program.

Obviously, the authority to use funds for direct services is important only if there are available funds. The McKinney Act amendments substantially increased the authorization for Subtitle VII-B programs from \$7.5 million to \$50 million. This increase could provide most states with more resources that could be used by school districts to provide the types of direct services needed to ensure the school success of many homeless students.

Unfortunately, there are several barriers that may prevent states from providing the level of assistance to homeless children described in the new legislation. Some of those barriers are within the language of the new Act itself. Some of those barriers are related to the appropriation for fiscal year 1991. Still others are related to the potential changes in the program suggested by President Bush's proposed budget for fiscal year 1992.

Constraints on Authorized Activities

Even though Public Law 101-645 provides substantial remedies for the problems of the original McKinney legislation, there are issues that are likely to constrain state responses to the needs of homeless children. Section 723(b)(1) of the Act requires that not less than 50 percent of local education agency grants be used to provide tutoring, remedial education services, or other educational services to homeless children and youth. Similarly, Section 723(b)(2) requires that not less than 35 nor more than 50 percent of local education agency grants be used to provide related services. These restrictions may inhibit the ability of some school districts to use funds from the Act to best meet the needs of local homeless children.

For instance, a district may have a tutoring program that homeless children may attend. As might frequently be the case, homeless students may not have access to transportation to and from the tutoring program. Such a district would not be able to seek a grant from Section 723 of the McKinney Act that only sought funds to provide the necessary transportation services. Because transportation is a related service, not more than 50 percent of the school district's grant could be directed towards this need. In such cases, the arbitrary determination of the distribution of funds may become a barrier to using the funds to best meet the needs of local homeless students.

Appropriation Preceded Authorization

Despite the aforementioned problems, the McKinney Amendments of 1990 encouraged the hope that this nation would take bold and positive steps to address the learning needs of homeless children and youth. However, the reauthorization bill was signed into law after the appropriation process for fiscal year 1991 was completed. Although Congress raised the authorization to \$50 million in recognition of the importance of appropriately addressing the needs of homeless students, the appropriation had to be based on the amounts authorized at the time the appropriation bill was developed. Thus, based on the previous authorization, Congress was only able to appropriate \$7.2 million for fiscal year 1991.

The low appropriation will effectively thwart the efforts of state coordinators to realize the potential of the new authorization. Nineteen states and the District of Columbia will continue to receive only \$50,000 for the entire Subtitle VII-B program. Most other states will only receive token amounts of new dollars for addressing the direct service needs of homeless students. The low appropriation is even more troublesome for those states who, in fiscal year 1990, received exemplary program grants. The new authorization eliminated the exemplary program grants based on the assumption that the significantly increased authorization for the state grants would result in improved state capacity to provide local grants for direct service needs. Without an appropriation to match the authorized funding level, several states will actually have diminished capacity in fiscal year 1991. Projects in states such as Massachusetts, North Dakota, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Washington are threatened with termination.

President's 1992 Budget

Even more ominous than the fiscal year 1991 budget, serious concerns exist regarding the proposed Presidential 1992 Budget for the education of homeless children and youth. Under this budget, all funds previously allocated to the U. S. Department of Education under the McKinney Homeless Assistance Act for the education of homeless children and homeless adults would be zeroed out and moved to the SAFAH (Supplemental Assistance for Facilities to Assist the Homeless) account under the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). This account would also include money for programs previously financed by the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Labor. A total of \$52 million has been budgeted for these combined programs. This represents an \$8.8 million cut in the combined current service level of these programs and an \$80.2 million cut from the total authorization level of these programs.

If passed, the President's proposed budget could dramatically decrease the likelihood that America's homeless children continue to enroll, attend, and achieve success in public schools. Administrative problems, such as matching grant requirements, could decrease the likelihood that school districts or state education agencies would be able to access McKinney funds. Worse yet, the President's budget relieves public education of the responsibility for educating homeless children. With the McKinney Amendments of 1990, Congress clearly expressed the agenda that state departments of education assume responsibility for breaking down the barriers that prevent the enrollment, attendance, and success of homeless children in public schools: a responsibility that HUD has little capacity to assume. Unless HUD should develop such a capacity (which would be unnecessarily duplicative), the McKinney Amendments of 1990 would become a paper tiger and an unfilled promise to America's homeless children and youth.

Reason for Hope

In 1987, the Child Welfare League of America reported that approximately 43 percent of America's homeless children did not attend school. Two years later, the U. S. Department of Education estimated that 28 percent of America's homeless children did not attend school. With few resources and a weak legislative mandate, state departments of education have begun to make a difference. Today, with the promise of greater resources and a much stronger reauthorization, there is substantial reason to believe that state departments of education, in cooperation with school districts and social service agencies, can continue to make an important difference in the lives of homeless children and youth.

The nation has reason to be hopeful, but there is not reason to be satisfied. Too much is lost each time a homeless child is denied access to schooling because of difficulty meeting bureaucratic requirements. Too much is lost each time a homeless youth drops out of school because there are not adequate resources to attend to his physical, social, or emotional needs. Too much is lost each time a homeless child decides that perhaps school is not a place where she can be accepted and successful. The costs of promoting the education of homeless children are far less than the costs suffered by our nation's economic, political, and social systems each time a homeless child gives up. By addressing the aforementioned concerns, we can continue to move forward, ensuring each homeless child the hope that comes with a free and appropriate public education.

Case Studies Highlight Current Successes and Future Potential

As the stories in this report illustrate, there is good reason for hope. Despite all the traumas associated with homelessness, homeless children can succeed in school. This document consists of true stories about homeless students in over a dozen states. The stories describe the hardships and triumphs of children and their families as they responded to the trauma of homelessness. The stories also describe how the efforts of public school personnel have helped generate personal successes for homeless students. Following each case study is a brief description of the ways in which the particular state would like to broaden its efforts to better respond to the educational needs of homeless children and youth.

None of the success stories listed here are accidents. Success was generated by caring, well-trained teachers, administrators, support personnel, and volunteers who had access to needed resources, and who were unfettered by archaic regulations and policies.

America has the capacity to generate so much more hope. For every success story listed in this document, there are thousands more waiting to be told if only our nation expresses such a will.

"Jeff's Story"

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Jeff is a sixteen-year-old eighth grade student who has found a haven in a financially struggling homeless educational program within an Arkansas community. During an interview with Jeff, he emphasized how important the homeless program had become in his life. He is attempting to get a GED (General Education Development Certificate) and plans to continue vocational training in auto mechanics or electrical repair. He is currently enrolled in an alternative school program and also takes a vocational electrical repair class in the afternoon program.

Jeff lives with a male cousin who provides housing, food, and security in exchange for Jeff's work in the cousin's auto mechanics and body shop. Jeff sees his employment as a three-prong opportunity: to learn a vocation that he is interested in pursuing, to help his cousin who doesn't seem to have loan security to expand his business, and to provide shelter and care for himself. Jeff has not seen or heard from his mother in approximately seven to eight months. Even though he lives with a relative, Jeff views himself as abandoned by his mother. Jeff is accustomed to an unstable lifestyle where moves have been frequent and undesired. Yet, he exhibits resilience and plans for future stability.

When Jeff registered for the 1990-91 school year, he was referred to the alternative school. The classroom for homeless youth offers Jeff independence and a flexible environment to pursue a GED and auto mechanics training. This program has provided a sense of stability and focus for this student even though his daily living arrangement is tentative with the cousin. The alternative school administration and homeless education teacher continue to support Jeff with needed human services and consistent educational guidance. The teacher provides transportation each morning for all students, if needed. Her comments concerning the importance of this support service relate to the tentative shelter conditions of teens in the program. She said, "There is no guarantee that they are at the same location every morning. They go where they can find shelter. I find them and bring them to school."

The teacher is also the link in connecting students from her classroom with the Job Training Partnership Act Program (JTPA) and the Department of Human Services for food stamps and health services. Coordination with mental health services and alcohol and drug abuse counseling is an integral service of the program. It provides security and stability for those teens in need.

The future success and continuation of this educational and service approach is in jeopardy. The administrator and the teacher anticipate that students will drop out if this program is discontinued. Some presently enrolled homeless students are not stable enough to function without the special attention and services provided through the program. A comment made by the teacher related that "the students were so fragile" and at this stage of their lives, they did not trust. She continued, "They have been let down so many times." Continued funding would support the gains in confidence and educational progress of the enrolled students. Funding would also provide stability for future enrollees. Jeff is focused and determined to succeed. With the continuation of this program, for Jeff and others like him, future success may become a reality.

The Arkansas Reaction

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Sufficient funding is critical at this juncture. Program administrators at local levels need to be acknowledged for their leadership in addressing issues and assured that the success of student-centered programs will be sustained through supportive funding efforts. Federal funding support and local program delivery can provide a free and appropriate education for all children. The relationship of inadequate funding to compromised program delivery and the erosion of program strength should influence the determination of appropriation levels and the distribution of state education agency grants. No one particular program thrust will meet the basic need of providing educational opportunities to all homeless children, but recognition of different program approaches and homeless population needs (e.g., urban vs. rural) should be reflected through funding agendas. Soft funding for critical programs, promoted through inadequate state education agency grants, serves as an inhibitor to local program development and delivery. Homeless students continue to be sacrificed and educationally compromised as a low priority in fiscal planning.

Legislation directs responsibility to state education agency grant recipients to identify and change policy and practice at the state level, but beyond such efforts, there is an undeniable need to supplement the education of homeless children through a revised funding effort for the minimally funded states. Arkansas has received a \$50,000 each grant year to staff a homeless office, enumerate homeless children statewide, identify educational barriers, establish and revise school policies and practices that are not educationally sensitive to the needs of homeless children, coordinate school and human service efforts, and develop successful models to serve homeless children.

During fiscal years 1988 and 1989, the Arkansas Homeless Children's Office funded the Alternative Education Pilot for Homeless Youth in Pulaski County. Students receive five hours per week tutoring and counseling and one weekend day per month for outdoor recreation. One professional staff person works fifteen hours per week, serving as an advocate for homeless students to school systems, community resources, and health service agencies. This program serves children from three school districts who live in five family shelters. Seventy-two shelter students will be served through the program.

Arkansas has approximately 4,500 homeless school-age children. With adequate funding, Arkansas could much better serve these children, and more fully actualize the intent of Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney Act.

"Magic's Story"

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Magic is an eight-year-old boy who lives with his mother in a shelter in Denver. Although eight, Magic could not read and had very poor math skills. Additionally, Magic seemed to have a poor self-concept. He did not get along well with other children. Frequently, he argued and fought with other children.

Magic was enrolled in the Educational Outreach Program for Children of the Homeless. This program has been in existence at Colfax School since February, 1990. The program provides after school tutorial assistance for homeless and latchkey children in grades 1 through 5. Other students at Colfax who are interested may participate also. Program hours are from 3 until 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. The program staff consists of a certified teacher, paraprofessional, and numerous tutors from all walks of life.

Magic begins the program every evening with a nutritious snack. Afterwards, students are divided into small teams where they receive help from tutors with their reading, mathematics, spelling, and English homework. The tutors were able to give Magic the extra attention he needed.

All the students participate in a very organized sports and physical fitness program which is provided by the Denver Parks and Recreation Department. Tennis lessons are also available for students in grades 3, 4, and 5. Students are trained in aerobics techniques by a paraprofessional. Students have also been introduced to puppetry. Community Resources, Inc. has provided enrichment, cultural, and self-improvement activities such as origami, square dancing, storytelling, Scottish dancing, conflict resolution, and self-concept enhancement. Monthly field trips are offered to all students enrolled in the program. The children have roller skated, dined at local restaurants, and been honored at a Christmas party which was sponsored by the Denver Police and Denver Parks and Recreation.

Magic and his mother appreciate the after-school program because it has added that extra touch of security, continuity, and love. Students can feel a sense of pride knowing that not only are they loved by their daily classroom teacher, but there is attention and help waiting for them when the school day ends. Volunteer tutors go "that extra mile" to assure students that they are special and to help them remember that not having a home does not subtract from their humanness. Many of the students need this assurance as they leave the after-school program and enter the world of "community shelter living."

Today, Magic has friends. He is able to work well with other children. Recently, Magic has learned to read. Also, he has learned to add and to subtract with regrouping. He recently wrote his first story which now is posted on one of the school's bulletin boards. He enjoys playing in the recreational activities. Magic's mother is particularly pleased with the after-school program. Without the program, Magic might have continued to fall further and further behind academically. His aggressive behaviors might have gotten him into more and more trouble. But today, Magic knows that he can succeed in school. He is only in the second grade, but his future is full of hope.

The Colorado Reaction

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During the course of a year, over 1,000 children and youth will experience homelessness in Colorado. In 1988, it was estimated that one-half of Colorado's homeless children did not attend school. Since then, several efforts have been made by the state department of education to increase the likelihood that the onslaught of homelessness does not signal the end of schooling. For instance, the Colorado Department of Education has encouraged local outreach efforts to identify and enroll homeless children and youth. Also, efforts have been made to change policies to improve access to enrollment for all homeless children.

As progress is attained in getting homeless children enrolled in school, additional resources would provide schools with the tools needed to ensure the success of these students. Projects such as the Educational Outreach Program for Children of the Homeless at Colfax Elementary and Crofton Elementary demonstrate the power of public schools to overcome the obstacles associated with homelessness. However, such programs cost dollars. Unfortunately, Colorado's fiscal year 1991 grant award from Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney Act will be only \$50,849. Even though Section 723 of the McKinney identifies many important direct service needs, the new grant will provide only \$849 new dollars to respond to those needs statewide.

In Colorado, there are many students living in shelters who, like Magic, have the ability to succeed in school. The Colorado Department of Education is eager to play a role in helping ensure the school success of all of these children. The resources potentially available through the newly reauthorized McKinney Act can significantly influence Colorado's ability to meet the educational challenges posed by homelessness and ensure the school success of all of the state's homeless children and youth.

"Brandi's Story"

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Brandi is an 11-year-old fifth-grade girl who lives with her mother in an emergency shelter in Baltimore City. Brandi's father does not reside in the shelter with them because the shelter cannot accommodate males. Brandi has a younger sister, but she is living temporarily with an aunt. Prior to seeking assistance at the shelter, Brandi's family lived with her aunt for two months, her grandmother for one month, and a family friend for two weeks.

Brandi leaves the shelter every morning at 7:00 a.m. to catch public transportation so that she can attend her former school. When Brandi first came to the shelter, prior to reporting to school, Brandi would stop by her aunt's house to pick up her books. She did not want her classmates to know that she lived in a shelter, so she pretended that she still lived with her aunt. The teachers noticed a difference in Brandi's behavior and her physical appearance after her move to the shelter. One teacher described Brandi as unusually quiet and withdrawn, different from the playful, energetic, and talkative child who entered her class in September. Another teacher reported that Brandi had lost interest in school and was likely to repeat the fifth grade. Brandi's teachers were unaware that she was living in a shelter and they were unable to help because Brandi would not talk and Brandi's mother would not respond to the repeated requests for a parent/teacher conference. The shelter director remarked that Brandi did not interact with other children in the shelter and she cried uncontrollably for long periods of time.

Through the Helping Hands Project, an after-school tutorial and homework assistance program for homeless children, Brandi has received the individual help she needs to improve her grades and her self-esteem. The Maryland State Department of Education received an Exemplary Program Grant award under the McKinney Homeless Assistance Act to provide tutorial and homework assistance for homeless children. Presently, twelve programs are operating in Baltimore City and Baltimore County shelters. Volunteer tutors visit each shelter two days a week and tutor children in reading, math, and English skills. In addition, local high school students provide homework assistance and read stories to the children. Monthly cultural enrichment trips are planned and each child receives a keepsake photograph of his experience.

Brandi loves the tutoring sessions and she even volunteers to read and tell nursery rhymes to the younger children using the magnetic board figures and puppets. Brandi's tutor, a local teacher, has taken a special interest in her. The tutor spends more than the scheduled one hour working with and talking to Brandi. In addition, the project facilitator made a follow-up visit to Brandi's school. "You should have seen her face light up when I walked into her classroom. Brandi is really improving academically and socially. She has finally stopped crying and started smiling again!"

For Brandi and the hundreds of students like her, the project has provided more than a helping hand. It has helped build and strengthen the partnerships between the shelters and the schools. Since the facilitator's visit, the staff at Brandi's school has participated in an awareness and sensitivity workshop conducted by the Maryland State Department of Education. The school and the shelter staff are now working together to identify and address the needs of their homeless children. When it was determined that the children at the shelter needed school supplies, the students conducted a "Pennies for the Homeless" drive. The students collected over five hundred dollars and they purchased school supplies which lasted the remainder of the school year. The drive has become an annual school project and the staff and students have a better understanding of what it means to be homeless. With a new sense of esteem, Brandi admits, "The children found out that I live in the shelter and they didn't tease me. Maybe they do understand."

The Maryland Reaction

Peggy Jackson-Jobe, Coordinator
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Maryland has 24 local school districts and 77 family shelters. Brandi attends school in a district that has ten of the twelve after-school tutorial and homework assistance projects. Although an estimated 1,200 homeless children will benefit from the Helping Hands Project, 2,800 children residing in shelters outside Baltimore City will not have access to this important resource. The Helping Hands Project is working in Maryland; however, the project may be forced to an end at the conclusion of this school year. The project was funded using McKinney Exemplary Program Grant funds. Under the new legislation, these funds were abolished with the promise of a more extensive state grant program.

Staff development is a significant component in Maryland's State Plan. The state coordinator, who is paid through McKinney funds, conducts staff awareness and sensitivity sessions in schools throughout Maryland. In addition, two statewide conferences are convened each year -- one for students and the other conference for educators, parents, providers, and advocates. Each activity has been successful in heightening awareness and motivating individuals and groups to join in a team approach to ensuring the success of our homeless students. At the conclusion of a staff awareness session for a school in Anne Arundel County, the staff formed planning teams for the development and implementation of a school-sponsored tutorial program at the shelter in their area.

On the average, Maryland's homeless students attend five to six different schools in a school year; therefore, maintaining continuity in their educational programs has become increasingly difficult. Although Maryland's homeless parents have the right to decide which school their children will attend, there is no money in the budgets of local and state educational agencies to provide transportation for homeless students back to their home school. Last school year, only 34 homeless students were transported back to their home school, while 3,766 homeless students continued to transfer from school to school. If adequate funds from the McKinney Homeless Assistance Act were available, these transportation needs could be met, allowing homeless students not only access to their home schools, but a greater likelihood of success in a more familiar and constant school environment.

"Michael's Story"

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Michael, a 12-year-old Hispanic boy, lives with his mother, father, ten-year-old brother, and infant sister in a family shelter in Worcester, Massachusetts. They have been living in the shelter for four months. The family moved to Massachusetts from Brooklyn, New York in 1988. Prior to their stay in the shelter, they had been living in substandard housing and paying over \$600 per month in rent. When they failed to pay the rent, their gas and electricity were turned off. This led them to seek shelter.

Michael has been in an Intermediate Behavior Disorders classroom for two months now. Originally he was placed in a Behavior Disorders classroom, then was moved into a Severe Behavior Disorders classroom because of his inability to comply with any school or classroom rules. Michael's parents have expressed their concern over the difficulties he has had in school and in his interactions with adults. He has a history of acting out in a structured setting. His mother describes him as a "very active boy who can't sit down to do homework or to play for very long without getting into trouble." Michael's present teacher describes him as an underachiever with no self-esteem. But he thrives on adult attention and will produce at his best and quite competently when recognized.

Through the Worcester Public Schools, Michael has been able to receive the extra adult attention which helps him to succeed in school. Worcester is one of five local education agencies within Massachusetts which received a grant under the McKinney Homeless Assistance Act through the Massachusetts Department of Education. These school districts each provide an after-school tutorial program to homeless children who are academically at-risk. Volunteer tutors receive training through the Massachusetts Department of Education. Each tutor is then paired with one child who is referred to the program by the child's parents or teachers. Tutoring sessions take place in a school, shelter, or other convenient site.

For Michael, the hour per week he spends with his tutor, David (a student from Worcester State College), has given him a new motivation and excitement to learn. His teacher describes how he shows enthusiasm on the days his tutor meets with him. "He asks for extra work to take home. He does well on his test the following day. His overall homework habits are improved. Organization, modeling of how to approach a task, and individualized instruction are important factors for Michael. It seems questionable that an hour a week could mean so much to a child, but for a child of such circumstances who has so little, it does indeed mean so much."

In addition to helping Michael, the project has also strengthened the school-shelter relationship. The shelter director has remarked that the students who receive tutoring are really excited about meeting and working with their tutor. She also says that this program is the most positive interaction she and the shelter staff have had with the Worcester Public Schools.

At this point, half-way through the school year, Michael's future looks promising as long as he is able to stay in his present classroom and build on the relationships he has developed with his teacher and his tutor. He will be guaranteed this continuity as long as he remains in the Worcester Public Schools. This district provides transportation throughout the city to enable homeless children to stay in their original school. In addition, because of the economic slow down in the New England area, the cost of rental units has decreased somewhat. Therefore, it looks hopeful that Michael and his family will be able to move into a permanent residence within a couple of months.

The Massachusetts Reaction

Michelle Linehan, Coordinator
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The scenario described on the preceding page takes place in one school district in Massachusetts. Michael is able to receive the extra educational services he needs because he attends school in a district which receives funds for the education of homeless children. But only five of the 300 school districts in Massachusetts receive such funds. Springfield, Salisbury, Lawrence, and Worcester received \$23,000 to expand their educational services for homeless students. Hull received a smaller grant to replicate this model in its schools. Three adolescent shelters in the state received grants of \$10,000 to provide educational services for the adolescents who reside in their shelters for short periods of time.

Homeless children in the other large urban areas of Massachusetts (e.g., Boston, Brockton, Hyannis, and in the smaller suburban or rural communities (e.g., Revere, Marshfield, Athol), will not have access to such programs. The limited monies currently available through the McKinney Homeless Assistance Act cannot begin to provide these school districts with the resources they need to truly help homeless children stay and succeed in school.

It is anticipated that the eight projects in Massachusetts directed toward the educational needs of homeless children will serve approximately 490 children during the 1990-91 school year. That means 5,510 of the 6,000 school-age children who will be homeless in Massachusetts during this school year will not even have the opportunity to receive extra educational services. Not all of these 6,000 students will need supplemental services to keep from falling behind in school. Those that do need such services, however, may not find them; this could mean retention, failure, and continuing low self-esteem for these children.

Students who have been doing well in school and then become homeless may experience difficulty getting to school. Homeless parents in Massachusetts have the right to decide which school their child will attend: the school they were attending when they became homeless or the school in the district in which they are temporarily housed. Unfortunately, this choice does not come with a guarantee of transportation. Often these children may miss days or weeks of school as parents try to arrange transportation. They may be constantly late for school as they have to take two or three buses to make their way to the school doors. There is no money in the budgets of either the cities and towns or of the state to cover such transportation costs. Money from the McKinney Homeless Assistance Act would allow hundreds of homeless children to maintain continuity in one educational program, thus preventing the social and emotional problems often associated with disruption of schooling. In Massachusetts it has been estimated that it would take \$100,000 to cover the cost of this transportation for one school year.

"Rosalie's Story"

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A 17-year-old young woman was thrown out of the home by her mother. The adolescent had refused to put up with the sexual advances of her mother's new male friend.

Homeless, the adolescent was somehow able to move from Northern Minnesota to a Twin Cities suburb. She moved in with a friend's family. The young woman did not have a room of her own so she slept on the living room sofa each night. The "doubled up" adolescent found a full-time job and began paying rent to the family she was staying with as well as paying for her own food, clothing, and transportation.

The suburban principal enrolled the student, accepting the address of her friend. The school nurse was her strongest support throughout this situation. Other school staff, however, were not as supportive. They told the young woman that she would never finish high school because of her full-time job and difficult living conditions.

Although this young woman did struggle, she proudly received a high school diploma with the rest of her classmates.

The Minnesota Reaction

Barbara Yates, Supervisor, At-Risk and Health Unit
Tom Gray, At-Risk Specialist
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Today, because of the Federal McKinney Legislation, a school administrator in Minnesota does not have to be "creative" in enrolling a homeless student. In May, 1989, the residency requirements were revised by the Minnesota Legislature. The school nurse is probably more aware of resources by attending workshops or receiving material from the Department of Education. Her colleagues are probably more sensitive, too. Interagency coordination has heightened awareness of the importance of a diploma and the services needed to keep a homeless student "ready to learn."

Instead of a few success stories there are many more today because of the McKinney Legislation. Unfortunately, there are not enough success stories yet.

A number of school districts, mostly in collaboration with social services agencies, are beginning to assist the homeless attain their education. The districts are assisting homeless families with young children by providing (1) early childhood family education, (2) improved educational and medical records transfer systems, and (3) tutorial services. With the development of Area Learning Centers (ALCS), more homeless youth can earn their diplomas because of access to evening classes, year-round education, flexible attendance policies, individual instruction, and social services support.

With the adoptions of these policies and strategies, and the resources to implement them, we can have more success stories in Minnesota. All children need and deserve homes and safe neighborhoods. All children need and deserve a quality education -- an education that will enable them to acquire their own homes in the future.

"Casey's Story"

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Casey, 17, lives with her mother in a shelter for women and children. They are Native Americans, of the Omaha Sioux. Casey is an only child and does not consider herself homeless. "We live in the shelter because my mom is on staff here," Casey said.

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Casey's mother works part-time at the shelter and part-time at another job. Casey currently works 32 hours a week at a pancake house.

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One of Casey's main needs at this time is an education, since she was recently expelled from school due to a poor attendance record. According to Casey, she has missed school due to a stomach problem that is currently being diagnosed. The illness was misdiagnosed earlier in the year. She also feels she needs better quality health care, "I've had this stomach problem a long time and they don't know what it is. The only reason they're running tests now is because my mom went in and made them."

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A pilot project sponsored by a local university student education association helped Casey with her homework earlier in the year. Education students from the university volunteered to go into the homeless shelter and tutor the students there. Casey is in need of more one-on-one instruction such as this.

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One of the barriers Casey has encountered is a transportation problem to and from school and work. Casey has to take a city bus to and from school because, due to limited funds, the school district does not provide transportation for homeless high school students. Relying on public transportation has occasionally made Casey late for school. Another of her barriers is a school system that does not always take into account her psychological needs as a homeless individual.

Casey is a bright young lady who will earn either her high school diploma or the GED within the next two years. She is strongly hoping for the diploma. She also would like to attend college, "because I don't want my family to be put in the situation that I am in right now."

The Nebraska Reaction

Jane Ziebarth, Coordinator
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The tutorial program in which Casey is involved is designed to address the unique intellectual, physical, emotional, and social needs of homeless children and youth. In addition to fostering intellectual growth, the Omaha tutorial program promotes greater self-esteem by providing homeless youth with positive role models. The program also fosters partnerships between university participants and shelter personnel. The university students have significantly increased their awareness of the plight of homeless children and youth in Omaha. This program is a volunteer project with no federal funding.

Perhaps with increased appropriations through the McKinney Homeless Assistance Act, more programs such as the Omaha Tutorial project can be implemented. Issues such as transportation, health/nutrition, and increased funding will need to be explored in more detail so that the Omaha program can continue to operate and grow. More tutorial programs like the Omaha project should be implemented in Nebraska so that homeless youth will receive additional assistance with school work, study skills, career training, and the other skills that will prepare them to live and work successfully.

"Jay's Story"

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Jay is a ten-year-old white male in the fifth grade. He lives in transitional housing (a converted hotel for homeless families) with his mother, stepfather, and three sisters. Jay receives services through a youth program of the county's Cooperative Extension Program.

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The first experience Cooperative Extension had with Jay was during Discovery Week in June, 1990. Three children were beating up on Jay. While Jay was very angry and wanted to fight back, he never hit the other children, although he was verbally violent. All four children were removed from the program that day. Jay was allowed to return to the program the next day because his verbal assaults were minimal. He was strongly encouraged to not be verbally assaultive. He was successful. Being the only child allowed to return to the program placed Jay in a vulnerable position since all the children who had been involved lived in the same complex. However, he handled the situation without fighting.

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In October, Cooperative Extension began H.A.P.P.Y. (Homework Activities and Play Program for Youngsters) Time, a homework and lifeskills program for school-age children at the transitional housing facility. This was made possible through a grant from the Homeless Youth Education Office in the state of Nevada. This pilot project is one of four pilot projects statewide designed to provide tutoring and counseling for homeless youth. As a result of this program, contact with Jay took place often.

When the program staff talked with Jay's mother and the mother of Robert, another ten-year-old male who is in Jay's class at school, it was discovered that Robert brought homework from school every day, while Jay claimed to never have homework. Jay's mom met with his teacher, who indicated that Jay was very far behind in his homework assignments. Jay's grade average was between a "D" and an "F" in every subject. The teacher gave Jay's mom a list of the missing assignments. Cooperative Extension personnel and volunteers met with Jay approximately four times per week to assist him with the backlog of assignments. Jay received one-on-one assistance for several weeks, focusing on completing as many of the back assignments as possible.

Jay recently received his report card, and his grades improved remarkably. He received two B's, one A, one C and two D's. This could not have happened without the program provided through Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act funds. These pilot funds (\$10,000 for one year) made this very positive academic change possible. Jay clearly has the capability to complete the assigned work. He just needed some quiet time and the individual guided tutoring that this program provided. Without the intervention from Cooperative Extension, Jay would not have been able to succeed in school -- the primary goal of the McKinney Act. He is now among the students who can hold up their heads at school, because he is learning to enjoy it again.

The Nevada Reaction

Shaun Griffin, Coordinator
(702) 784-4921

The program described on the preceding page took place in one school district in Nevada. Jay was able to participate in a comprehensive after-school tutorial and self-confidence program because he attends school in a district that received pilot project funds from the state department of education through the McKinney Homeless Assistance Act. The Homeless Youth Education Office awarded four pilot project grants to school districts and private, nonprofit agencies to work with homeless youth education. All four of the programs focus on educational and personal support for the youth and their families. Nevada has 17 school districts, of which only two received pilot project funds: Clark County in the south (Las Vegas area) and Washoe County in the north (Reno area). More districts would have received funds if they had been available.

During the 1990-91 school year, the four pilot projects will serve approximately 350 youth. There are approximately 1,300 school-age homeless youth in Nevada. Fewer than 27 percent will receive the support services they desperately need. Furthermore, virtually no after-school academic or personal counseling will be available to homeless youth in the rural areas which make up the balance of the state -- 15 other school districts. In Las Vegas, the nation's 17th largest school district (presently serving 130,000 students), only a fraction of the homeless youth are in after-school pilot programs.

At the end of the academic year, these programs will terminate unless private funding can be obtained to continue them. Nevada is a minimum allotment state because of its small population (1,200,000). Hence, it receives only \$50,000 annually to educate its homeless youth. Had the state homeless youth office not made a conscious decision to award pilot grants during the 1990-91 year, there would have been no pilot programs for these youth. Nearly all of the state's 1990-91 funds (\$40,000) were set aside to provide special assistance to these youth. However, there are simply not enough funds to coordinate a statewide office, train school advocates, count homeless youth, and fund pilot projects. These funds were a start, but a comprehensive program must be put in place to ensure that additional support services are available to these youth. Without them, there is a very strong chance that the cycles of poverty and illiteracy will be repeated by yet another generation. And though Nevada is deceptively small in population, one in four elementary teachers will have a homeless student in her classroom this year. We can no longer afford to hope this program will go away. We simply have to put more resources into the educational futures of our youth, particularly those without adequate shelter.

"Tiana's Story"

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Tiana is an 11-year-old girl who, since July, 1989, has been homeless with her family. The family had lived for 20 years in a rural county in New Jersey. When Tiana's mother lost her job and was unable to afford the cost of maintaining their apartment, the family was placed in a motel for approximately five months. Then, for six months, Tiana's family lived with relatives until the relatives sold their home and moved away. Currently, Tiana and her family live in a family shelter in another part of the county -- the family's third domicile since they became homeless.

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The frequent moves seriously disrupted Tiana's educational progress. Tiana's mother stated that during the 1989-90 school year, Tiana did poorly, both academically and behaviorally. The stress of being homeless caused Tiana to be retained in the fourth grade. During the 1989-90 school year, Tiana attended three different schools.

In July, 1990, New Jersey enacted legislation which extended to homeless students the option of attending school in the district where the child attended before becoming homeless, if such a placement is in the best interest of the child. Furthermore, this legislation provided transportation to homeless students (provided by the district of residence) when necessary. The intent of this legislation is to ensure continuity of educational services during the period of homelessness. The McKinney Homeless Assistance Act provided the mandate for allowing such transfers, the state of New Jersey recognized the need to provide transportation, and Tiana is one of the many homeless children who can now continue to receive educational services in the district of residence.

Regular attendance and continuity in programming have changed Tiana's life at school. Tiana's mother reports that Tiana is presently an "A+" student who completes her homework without hesitation. Attending only one school this year has made a major difference. Unfortunately, Tiana continues to live in a family shelter. Her family continues to hope to obtain their own home. However, Tiana is acquiring the academic skills that may ensure her future success in life, despite her family's current difficulties.

The New Jersey Reaction

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During the 1990-91 school year, New Jersey began implementation of the revised residency law for homeless students. In New Jersey, a homeless child can attend school in one of three districts: the district of residence (the school where the student attended prior to becoming homeless), the district where the student last attended, or the district where the student is temporarily housed. The choice among the three options must be made based on the best interest of the child. This state law became effective in July, 1990, making the district of residence responsible for ensuring that the student receives educational services, including transportation if necessary.

To implement this law, a statewide network of homeless education liaisons, one for each of the 600 school districts in the state, has been established. The New Jersey Office of Education for Homeless Children and Youth, which is funded through McKinney Act resources, has provided training to these liaisons related to federal and state mandates as well as to the educational, emotional, and psychological needs of these children.

New Jersey has started to eliminate the barriers that prevent homeless children from accessing public education. Networks of shelters, social service agencies, and school districts have been established. Statewide, an awareness of the needs of homeless children has been created. The McKinney Homeless Assistance Act and the funds it has provided enabled New Jersey to address the critical educational needs of these children.

Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney Homeless Assistance Act (as recently amended) now needs to be fully funded. Full funding would enable states, such as New Jersey, to expand and develop programs. With full funding, local school districts will be able to develop programs that respond to the needs of homeless children and youth, thereby giving them the opportunity to be successful in school and successful in life.

"Levi's Story"

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Levi lives in a three-room house with no indoor plumbing or bathroom. He lives with his grandmother, her seventeen- and eighteen-year-old children, and the seventeen-year-old's two-year old-child. The house is dirty and worn. Grandmother is a semi-invalid and uses a walker. Levi is eligible for AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children) payments. Because the grandmother's husband is deceased, the 17- and 18-year-olds qualify for Social Security payments.

Levi's mother doesn't want him to live with her, but his grandmother is willing to keep him. However, his grandmother drinks, and this past weekend Levi was not fed.

Levi's needs are many. He needs special education services and speech and language development. His physical health is good, although he is frequently dirty and has had head lice. He claims he has trouble sitting because there are no chairs in the house. Emotionally, Levi appears to be socially maladjusted and unable to relate to others in his peer group. He also appears hyperactive, highly disruptive, and highly distractible. He is moody and gets into fights frequently.

Transportation to school is provided by the school bus route which goes right by the house. His attendance is excellent: he has missed only six days this year.

Levi is in first grade. He is receiving special help through a tutor provided through a grant from McKinney Homeless Assistance Act Funds at Cannonball Elementary School on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation. This extra assistance allows Levi to compete with his peer group in school. The one-to-one tutoring also builds Levi's self-esteem, which is critical to helping overcome the social difficulties and the emotional hostilities that Levi is experiencing. If special help can be continued, Levi will no doubt complete his schooling and graduate. However, without such assistance, Levi's future is difficult to predict.

The North Dakota Reaction

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The Cannonball site is one of five projects for the education of homeless children currently operating in North Dakota. This site receives \$10,000 annually. North Dakota's annual grant under Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney Act has been \$50,000. However, for the 1990-91 school year, the state also received a McKinney Act Exemplary Programs Grant of \$78,000. A similar grant was anticipated for the 1991-92 school year (for a total of \$156,000), however, the Exemplary Grant Program was terminated with the recent reauthorization and funding was lost.

Current McKinney funds allow the state to serve 250-300 children through the five projects. This is perhaps a quarter of those who need educational support services during the year. After the Exemplary Program Grant funds are expended, the remaining \$50,000 will provide for continuation of perhaps two or three projects.

At this point, the state is only able to provide fragmented services to homeless children. Various sites offer tutoring, school supply assistance, after-school academic enrichment opportunities, and transportation assistance. The projects attempt to provide each homeless child with an overall feeling of acceptance and worth. It seems terribly unfair that these advantages cannot be offered to all those in need. But, in most cases, school districts in North Dakota are financially strapped, and cannot realistically be expected to continue to do more with less.

Homeless children are often the most needy group of all -- physically, emotionally, and, not infrequently, academically. To approach their educational needs holistically, there is no question that more federal financial support is needed.

"Jason's Story"

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At age twelve, Jason was large for his age and had been suspected of acts of vandalism around the apartment complex -- Jason and the young, aspiring gang members who followed him around. The landlord had ample reason to evict Jason's family. Four days later, Jason was suspended from school. The principal said the boy was the worst child he had encountered in twenty years, and refused to admit him. The way Jason cursed at teachers, bullied classmates and created disruptions went beyond simple acting out. And Jason's behavior went beyond incorrigible when he stood in the street in front of the school, defying traffic to hit him.

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A mental health specialist diagnosed Jason as emotionally disturbed, and put him on Ritalin. Vivian, Jason's mother, is single with three children. Her latest relationship with a man ended with police involvement. Jason's older brother is spending his high school years in the state's toughest juvenile offender facility. Their four-year-old sister seldom verbalizes, instead she makes her demands known through whining and shrieks.

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Jason and his family needed more than the standard shelter/food/clothing and school enrollment. Thanks to the coordinated efforts of the Salem-Keizer Homeless Student Liaison Program and Salem Outreach Shelter, the family was immediately linked to appropriate services. The liaison worked with the staff at a local school -- the teachers, counselor, and principal -- and with Jason's mother and the shelter provider, to develop a "team" around Jason, providing the attention, support, and pressure Jason needed to succeed in school. The structure at the shelter enabled Vivian to set limits and become a better parent. Child care and transportation were provided while Vivian took a Life Skills course and co-dependency counseling, also offered through the program. Bus tokens allowed Jason to join the Boys' Club, where he could find the role models he needed as mentors.

Another happy ending. The family is stabilized now in housing. Vivian is enrolled in business school, and has been a public speaker on behalf of the Salem-Keizer Program. The school liaison is working to get Jason's four-year-old sister into Head Start. Though Jason's educational delays place his skills at elementary levels, he is enrolled in a middle school, where his peers are of equal physical development. He has counseling and group therapy at the school district's Emotional Growth Center. The Salem-Keizer Liaison Program, operating on an McKinney Exemplary Program Grant award, can chalk up another success. Jason has a chance now; there are only a few thousand more families needing such help.

The Oregon Reaction

Dona Cunningham, Coordinator
(503) 378-3606

The Salem-Keizer School Liaison Program for Homeless Children, now in its second year, was initiated through Chapter 1 funding, and continued through McKinney Exemplary Program Grant funding. The "whole family" approach to providing services has not only enabled Jason to succeed in school, it has strengthened his family in ways that will prevent the recurrence of the problems that led to their homelessness.

Oregon lost more than most other states when the Exemplary Program Grant was cut from the federal program: two local school districts, Salem-Keizer and Portland Public Schools, lost their second-year funding. Oregon is a minimum grant state (\$50,000) which is not receiving any increase in funds from the collapse of the Exemplary Program Grant into the combined appropriation. The state cannot make up for the combined loss of \$230,000 to these local programs: funds which were awarded, then taken away.

Despite the obvious advantages in coordinating services and eliminating the barriers to school enrollment for homeless children, having even a part-time school/shelter liaison is unaffordable for most Oregon school districts. Heavy school enrollment overall affords teachers and counselors little time to take on these additional activities. If Oregon were to receive federal funding at the level previously authorized, the state could invest in local districts by encouraging them to follow this exemplary program model.

"Bryant's Story"

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Mrs. G and her son, Bryant, moved to Philadelphia from New Jersey. They had been living doubled-up with relatives in their hometown. The reason for the move is unclear. However, lack of income led the family to seek shelter through the city intake office for homeless families. They were assigned to a residence in North Philadelphia.

Fortunately for Bryant, Philadelphia is one of five school districts in Pennsylvania that received a grant under the McKinney Homeless Assistance Act through the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Homeless Student Initiative. A major thrust of the Philadelphia School District's Homeless Student Initiative project has been the establishment of positive working relationships with other city agencies in an attempt to provide coordinated services to homeless students. One of these agencies has been the Philadelphia Health Management Corporation (PHMC). At the PHMC shelter, social workers work closely with the homeless student liaison/coordinator, as one way of monitoring families in which students are not in school.

Upon Bryant's admission to the shelter, inquiries regarding Bryant's school history revealed that he was eligible for special education services, but was not enrolled in school. The Homeless Student Initiative liaison/coordinator was notified by the social worker.

On the Thursday the information was received, the liaison/coordinator took the following steps:

1. Ascertained whether the mother had any school records. (She had none.)
2. Contacted the special education supervisor in the District Office and explained the situation. The supervisor notified the neighborhood school that Bryant would report to school on Monday. This entrance date was relayed to the mother by the coordinator.
3. Obtained the name and location of the previous school; called the principal of the school who had the school nurse give the coordinator a verbal report of the immunization record. A duplicate of Bryant's records were then forwarded to the receiving school. The address of the office from which the special education records could be requested was also obtained at this time.
4. Called the school counselor of the neighborhood school and relayed all information. The counselor agreed to (1) relay the immunization data to the school nurse, and (2) have the parent sign a release form and send for the student's special education records.

Bryant was able to remain at the neighborhood school and was placed in an appropriate educational setting. To ease his entry, Bryant was matched with a classroom buddy (as happens to all new students, including sheltered students). This school receives a significant number of homeless students. To encourage a sense of community, the building principal and staff have initiated a number of regular joint school/shelter activities.

Monday through Thursday, Bryant attends one of the Initiative's after-school homework centers at the shelter. The center is staffed with student tutors, teachers, and counselors from his school. A snack is provided and time for fun and social activities are built into each two-hour session. The level of cooperation among the Homeless Student Initiative staff, the staff in the District Office, and neighborhood school prevented this student from experiencing an unnecessary school enrollment delay and provided concrete assistance to a parent. Furthermore, the extra efforts to respond to Bryant's educational, emotional, and social needs have enhanced his chances of being successful in school.

The Pennsylvania Reaction

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In January, 1989, the Pennsylvania Department of Education launched Pennsylvania's Homeless Student Initiative (H.S.I.). Pilot programs were funded in five Pennsylvania communities.

The research phase of the H.S.I., conducted between January and June of 1989, produced models of coordination between schools and shelters and developed formal methods for keeping track of homeless students. The implementation phase of the H.S.I., continued during the 1989-90 school year, explored how homeless students' educational needs could be met in a more comprehensive manner.

This fall, after approximately 15 months in operation, Pennsylvania's H.S.I. was recognized as one of 17 exemplary programs for homeless students in the nation and received the largest grant award by the U.S. Department of Education under the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act. This \$265,000 grant continues four of the five local H.S.I. projects and helps to begin a new pilot in another high need area.

Services provided to homeless students under the H.S.I. projects include case management by an educational liaison who acts as a link between schools and shelters, local student tracking systems or networks which identify homeless students to ensure their family school enrollment, and after-school tutoring and academic support programs. In addition, projects provide special transportation services, outreach to parents in shelters, adequate school supplies, and student health and academic screenings. All H.S.I. projects conduct district-wide inservice and sensitization programs for school and shelter staff.

The local H.S.I. projects have become centers for program development and information dissemination. Communities not funded under the H.S.I. are adopting policies and procedures, but are often unable to provide these specialized H.S.I. services to students when they become homeless. Pennsylvania shelters reported serving approximately 13,000 homeless students during the 1989-90 school year. The five local H.S.I. projects served approximately 2,500 of these homeless students. If additional funds were to become available, Pennsylvania could utilize H.S.I. exemplary models to institute programs in eight to ten other high-need communities, thus reaching many more of these homeless students statewide.

Nationwide, the new legislation eliminated the Exemplary Program Grants in favor of a much broader program. If funded, this program would provide states with dollars which could be shared with local school districts to provide needed services to homeless students. Because there is no longer authorization for the Exemplary Program Grants, these competitive grants will not be available in fiscal year 1991 or in any succeeding years. Without the Exemplary Program Grant funds, those states and school districts awarded such funds in fiscal year 1990 stand to lose significant resources. Pennsylvania's exemplary programs, programs making a difference in the lives of homeless children and youth, will suffer.

"Amanda's Story"

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Eight-year-old Amanda came to the Women's Shelter with her mother and six-year-old sister. Her step-father had beaten and threatened to kill her mother. Amanda had witnessed some of this abuse. They had come to the shelter to be safe. Amanda was in the third grade and had been uprooted from school. The extent of the emotional and physical abuse she had been subjected to was not known.

Amanda was very scared and withdrawn when she arrived. She wanted to be close to her mother and needed much reassurance and attention. She had difficulty socializing with other children. Amanda seemed in good health, but frequently complained of headaches and stomachaches. She had difficulty talking about her feelings and expressing her needs.

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Amanda was placed in the children's advocate program at the shelter. She was provided with a structured support group, play activities, and individual attention. She was asked her opinion, was given opportunities to work on a safety plan, and was allowed and encouraged to express her feelings, opinions, and ideas. Healthy role models were provided for social interaction and play. A school tutor was also provided for Amanda at the shelter.

As a result of these interventions, Amanda began to blossom. She became more confident and began to express her ideas and feelings. Her physical complaints became less frequent. She performed well in her school work and began participating in activities with other children. Her demands for attention became less frequent as her confidence in herself and her abilities grew.

Amanda will need continuing support and encouragement. She will need to continue to work on her self-esteem and self-expression. The on-going children's support group at the shelter will greatly assist in her progress. The outlook for Amanda is good, if she is provided continuing support and encouragement in her environment.

The South Dakota Reaction

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Amanda's success story is a direct result of a program that was funded by a Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act grant. Amanda was fortunate that she was in an area of the state that is able to provide special services to homeless children and youth.

South Dakota receives \$50,000 each grant year to provide education programs for homeless children and youth. The state is currently running three projects statewide through shelters. These programs stress social skills development, maintaining academic levels, and increasing cultural and enrichment activities. One of these projects was selected as a host site for the Reading is Fundamental (RIF) "Project Open Book." Children at the site have access to books that are distributed without charge to homeless individuals. RIF was only able to provide this service to ten states nationwide.

South Dakota's \$50,000 McKinney Act grant must also be directed toward data collection, school personnel awareness training, policy revision at the state level, and the dissemination of information through workshops, conferences, and responses to inquiries. Recent legislation mandates that states go one step further and eliminate any barriers that may restrict the access of homeless children to an appropriate education. However, there are no new dollars to assist South Dakota in effectively responding to these mandates.

There were 2,275 homeless children and youth reported in South Dakota during 1990. Many of these children and youth continue to have educational needs that have not been adequately met. Hopefully, our nation will recognize these children and respond to their needs.

"Tammy's Story"

T Tammy is an eight-year-old who lives with her mother and younger brother and sister in a shelter in downtown Dallas. In recent years, Tammy has moved from Denison, to Sherman, to Abilene, to Fort Worth, and currently to Dallas, Texas. Various temporary cooking jobs have never provided Ms. S (Tammy's mother) with enough money to consistently provide the food, shelter, and clothing that her children need. Thus, Ms. S has frequently found the need to move in search of a better life for herself and her three children.

e Immediately upon admission to the shelter in Dallas, Tammy was enrolled at City Park Elementary. At City Park, a lack of school records, birth certificates, or other documents does not slow the enrollment process. Even if the child has not been immunized, the principal, Mrs. Nix, has been known to get in her van and take the family to a nearby public health clinic that provides the immunizations without charge.

x When Tammy first arrived at City Park, she was very shy. She rarely spoke at all. Perhaps the frequent moves had left Tammy unwilling to make friends, unwilling to trust. But Tammy soon found that City Park was a special place. Tammy was assigned a buddy who made sure that Tammy was properly introduced to the school and the students. Tammy was given a set of school supplies so that she would fit in with other students. Also, Tammy was assigned a mentor through the school's Pupil Assistance Support System (PASS). Tammy's mentor (one of City Park's teachers) made regular contact with her, sometimes sending her notes, sometimes eating breakfast with her in the cafeteria, or sometimes walking with Tammy on the playground.

a Like all new students at City Park, Tammy got to participate in the Newcomer's Club. This club (sponsored by one of the teachers) meets regularly to play self-concept enhancing games and enjoy snacks donated by the teachers. During regular classroom instruction, Tammy gets lots of attention and support because City Park has used Federal Chapter 1 funds to reduce class sizes below the state ceilings. Also, City Park has an extensive, well-organized volunteer program that provides individual tutoring to students who can benefit from such a service. Finally, after school, Tammy participates in a baton twirling/dance class sponsored by the district's physical education department. Special arrangements are made to ensure that students who live in shelters are able to participate in the program.

s All of this special attention has had a dramatic effect on Tammy. No longer withdrawn, Tammy recently had a starring role in a schoolwide production. She is a B+ plus student who enjoys school and now wants to become a nurse. Tammy says that City Park is the best school she has attended because, "They (the teachers) spend time working with me. I know my teachers think I'm smart. I just know they do."

Tammy's teachers and principal consider her exceptional -- just as exceptional as the few hundred other children who come to City Park Elementary each day. At City Park Elementary, every child has a place, every child belongs, every child succeeds.

The Texas Reaction

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The Texas Education Agency, through the use of McKinney Homeless Assistance Act funds, has encouraged the replication of the successes of City Park Elementary at other schools throughout Texas. One project provided the Dallas Independent School District with a grant of \$10,000 to identify best practices, such as those employed at City Park, and develop a manual of best practice procedures. Another project involved the development of a Campus Self-Assessment Guide that would allow campuses the opportunity to self-evaluate their efforts to meet the needs of homeless children and youth. Nine of twenty Regional Education Service Centers in Texas have been awarded contracts to provide technical assistance to schools serving homeless children and youth. Through these contracts, education service centers help schools improve practices related to enrolling homeless children and youth, training school personnel concerning the needs of homeless students, providing access to a full range of services in a manner that does not stigmatize children, and coordinating community efforts to meet the needs of homeless children and youth. All of these efforts have been possible because of McKinney Homeless Assistance Act funds. As a result, many schools in Texas are beginning to emulate the processes that have made City Park successful. However, there is significant room for improvement.

Eleven entire regions of the state are not receiving benefit from the technical assistance project. Furthermore, many schools have identified strategies for improving services to homeless children; however, inadequate resources have prevented implementation of many services such as counseling, extra tutoring, transportation, and social work services. During the 1991-92 school year, Texas will be able to provide only three grants to school districts (ranging up to \$50,000) for direct services to homeless children. At best, only a small percentage of Texas' 18,000 known homeless school-age children will benefit from these services.

Many of the barriers that were keeping homeless children out of school in Texas only a few years ago, have been systematically removed. Now, however, school districts are asking, "How can we provide the extra health services that this child needs? Where will we get funds to provide transportation to and from the shelter? Who is going to fund the after-school programs, the summer programs, and the other services that our homeless students may need?" Texas has been creative in responding to those questions, but the concept of "coordinating resources" assumes the existence of an uncommitted resource. Such an assumption has proven faulty in some areas of the state.

City Park provides evidence of the quality that Texas schools can offer homeless children and youth. The Texas Education Agency is committed to maximizing the use of available human, material, and fiscal resources to provide such quality in school districts throughout the state. A full appropriation of the McKinney Act would greatly enhance the extent to which Texas schools might develop the type of quality programs that make a significant difference in the lives of homeless children.

"Mike's Story"

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Eight-year-old Mike is fully and successfully participating in mainstream classes at the B. F. Day Elementary School in Seattle. For Mike, this is an achievement that would have seemed unlikely a year ago, and which has been made possible through KOOL-IS (Kids Organized on Learning in School), funded by a Stewart B. McKinney Exemplary Program Grant awarded to the Seattle school district.

Mike, along with his ten-year-old sister and twelve-year-old brother, came to Seattle with their mother in February, 1990. The family had experienced domestic violence over a period of several years. When the level of abuse began to escalate intolerably, Valerie knew that she had to escape for her safety and that of her children. They left behind their home, possessions, pets, and friends to escape their abuser in Arkansas and "doubled-up" with a friend's family in Seattle.

When Valerie approached Seattle school district enrollment staff and indicated that her living situation was temporary, the staff, trained by KOOL-IS to be sensitive to such situations, assigned the children to B. F. Day Elementary. Mike was provided with meal tickets for breakfast and lunch, school supplies, and clothing on his first day. For the next three days, Mike was in the transition room where team assessment indicated that he was healthy, but was academically below grade level, and that he was suffering emotional distress. During this period in the transition room, Mike's case manager became his mentor and his contact person as Mike began adjusting to the new school. Having immediate support instead of needing to be instantly competitive when he was emotionally withdrawn has made a big difference in Mike's self-esteem and his successful interaction with peers.

After making a home visit to inform Valerie of Mike's assessment results, the KOOL-IS team went to work. Mike began to spend five hours a week with volunteer tutors from the Atlantic Street Family Resource Center. This one-to-one time helped Mike gain confidence in his ability to become part of the school. At the same time, a counselor from the Center began working with Mike to overcome the psychological damage caused by homelessness as a result of domestic violence.

As Mike was adjusting to school, his family moved three times -- from the friend's home, to a family shelter, and finally to an apartment. After a three-month search, the KOOL-IS case manager was able to find a safe, affordable apartment for Mike's family. The Atlantic Street Center (a private, non-profit partner in KOOL-IS) provided the deposit and first month's rent and volunteers transported donated furniture and household goods to the new home. Mike did not miss any classes during these moves because the Seattle school district was notified of the changes and was able to make necessary transportation arrangements to provide the continuity Mike needs.

Mike's progress is still carefully monitored by the KOOL-IS team. Although much work still needs to be done to overcome the disruption caused by homelessness and family violence, the case manager is confident that Mike is on his way to a happy and productive future.

The Washington Reaction

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Mike is only one of the 9,000 school-age children in Washington who were known to be homeless this year. During the 1990-91 school year, Seattle has used a \$249,000 McKinney Exemplary Program Grant to provide school-based intervention through KOOL-IS. During the 1991-92 school year, there will be no Exemplary Program Grants. Also, the state of Washington has been told to expect only \$16,000 in McKinney funds for direct services for all of the state's homeless students. It is important to note that the 1990 amendments to the McKinney Act indicate that it is also appropriate to use this funding to help the 10,000 homeless children in the state who have not yet reached school age.

The Washington state legislature has removed barriers related to legal residences and guardianship which may formerly have prevented homeless students from enrolling in school. Washington is one of the few states to provide specific funding in the state budget for the educational support of homeless students. The state provided \$250,000 for homeless education grants in the 1990-91 school year. After meeting the requirements of establishing need, forming a partnership with a local shelter provider, and submitting a plan for homeless student support, the school districts that were awarded state grants were Bellingham, Federal Way, Longview, Port Angeles, Seattle, Spokane, Tacoma, and Wenatchee. The Spokane program, which expected 12 students a day and is now serving an average of 40 students a day, is a familiar example of the growing need. Not only do existing programs need to expand, but the state has also been contacted by ten more districts who recognize the need to start homeless student programs in their communities.

School-based intervention partnerships like KOOL-IS are successful. All Washington homeless student programs are partnerships that involve shelters, public social service agencies, and charitable community organizations working with schools. When a homeless family finds its help through the children's school, then continuity at the school becomes a higher priority for the family and tends to encourage successful stabilization in that school district.

Full appropriation of the authorized \$50 million for the education of homeless children and youth would provide approximately \$450,000 for direct services in Washington state for the 1992-93 school year. In addition to Mike, there were another 19,999 children who could have qualified for use of these funds this year. Without a full appropriation, it is unlikely that many of these children will have stories that end as happily as Mike's.

Conclusion

Homeless children, such as Tammy in Texas, Jay in Nevada, or Bryant in Pennsylvania, are not much different from any other children. They all have the need to play, to learn, to be nurtured, and to feel loved. However, the children described in the preceding pages, like hundreds of thousands of other children in America, have experienced the unique trauma of homelessness. They have been separated from their homes, their belongings, and all that was their way of life. For each of these children, success in school continues to be possible; however, for many homeless children, school success can only be ensured through the deliberate efforts of teachers, school districts, state departments of education, and our federal government. Only through deliberate efforts can we ensure that homeless children will enroll in school, attend regularly, enjoy the support of caring teachers, principals, and support personnel, and gain access to the services that may be essential to overcoming the trauma and attaining school success.

Clearly, the nation has a choice -- gamble or invest. We can gamble with Magic's future and test the creativity of his teachers, the determination of his mother, or the generosity of his community. We can continue funding programs so that resources reach only a fraction of the nation's homeless children. (Even using conservative estimates, the fiscal year 1991 appropriation provides little more than \$25 per homeless child per year.) Without regard to the mounting evidence, we can continue to try to convince ourselves that the problem does not exist -- not in my town, not in my state.

The risks associated with such a choice are staggering. It is better that our Jeff's and Michaels learn legitimate ways to support themselves rather than end up in overcrowded prisons. Insufficient public funds will not support the Rosalies or Levis who have not had the opportunities to learn basic skills. There are not enough shelters to house all of the children of the Caseys, Jays, and Amandas should our gamble fail. Moreover, there simply is not enough human potential in America -- potential to create, to inspire, to love, to build -- such that we can afford to waste that which is in every Bryant, every Jason, and every Brandi.

On the other hand, the required investment is tremendous. A tremendous amount of courage is required to face the reality that hundreds of thousands of children are homeless in the world's greatest nation. A tremendous amount of energy and determination, with a reasonable supply of fiscal resources, are required to restructure schools so that any child, even a child experiencing the trauma of homelessness, will learn.

The National Association of State Coordinators for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth applauds the courage, energy, and determination of the national leaders who have sought to respond to the educational needs of homeless children and youth. Furthermore, we encourage a continued commitment to a hope for a better tomorrow for every child who is homeless today. We encourage and join in a full investment in all that is required to make a difference -- not just for a few, but for every homeless child and every homeless youth. In the face of incredible adversity, many of the children we have been privileged to serve have not given up hope. Neither shall we.

Appendix A

On November 29, 1990, President Bush signed into law the McKinney Homeless Assistance Amendments of 1990 (P. L. 101-645). The portion of the McKinney Act related to the education of homeless children and youth, Subtitle VII-B, was substantially altered by Title VI of the amendments. The following is a reproduction of the Act, as amended, based upon the revisions indicated in the Congressional Record, Volume 136, No. 148--Part II, October 25, 1990.

STEWART B. MCKINNEY HOMELESS ASSISTANCE ACT SUBTITLE VII-B (Sections 721-722) as amended November 29, 1990

Section 721.Statement of Policy.

It is the policy of the Congress that--

(1) each State educational agency shall assure that each child of a homeless individual and each homeless youth have access to a free, appropriate public education which would be provided to the children of a resident of a State and is consistent with the State school attendance laws;

(2) in any State that has a residency requirement as a component of its compulsory attendance laws or other laws, regulations, practices, or policies that may act as a barrier to the enrollment, attendance, or success in school of homeless children and homeless youth, the State will review and undertake steps to revise such laws, regulations, practices, or policies to assure that the children of homeless individuals and homeless youth are afforded a free and appropriate public education; and

(3) homelessness alone should not be sufficient reason to separate students from the mainstream school environment.

Section 722.Grants for State and Local Activities for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth.

(a) GENERAL AUTHORITY.--The Secretary of Education is, in accordance with the provisions of this section, authorized to make grants to States to carry out the activities described in subsections (c), (d), and (e).

(b) ALLOCATION.--From the amounts appropriated for each fiscal year pursuant to subsection (g), the Secretary shall allot to each State an amount which bears the same ratio to the amount appropriated in each such year as the amount allocated under part A of chapter 1 of title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to the local educational agencies in the State in that year bears to the total amount allocated to such agencies in all States, except that no State shall receive less than \$50,000. The Secretary shall reserve 0.1 percent of the amount appropriated for each fiscal year to be allocated by the Secretary among the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and Palau (until the Compact of Free Association with Palau takes effect pursuant to section 101(a) of Public Law 90-658), according to their respective need, as determined by the Secretary, except that no such territory shall receive less in fiscal year 1991 than it received in fiscal year 1990. The Secretary may also reserve not to exceed 1 percent of the amount appropriated for each fiscal year for programs for Indian students served by schools funded by the Secretary of the Interior, as determined under the Indian Self-

Determination and Education Assistance Act consistent with the purposes of this Act. As used in this subsection, the term 'State' shall not include the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, or Palau.

(c) **AUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES.**--Grants under this section shall be used--

- (1) to carry out the policies set forth in section 721 in the State;
- (2) to provide activities for and services to homeless children and homeless youths that enable such children and youths to enroll in, attend, and achieve success in school;
- (3) to establish or designate an Office of Coordinator of Education of Homeless Children and Youth in accordance with subsection (d);
- (4) to prepare and carry out the State plan described in subsection (e);
- (5) to develop and implement programs for school personnel to heighten awareness of specific problems of the education of homeless children and youth; and
- (6) if amounts appropriated for the applicable fiscal year exceed the amount appropriated for fiscal year 1990 under this section, to provide grants to local educational agencies for purposes of this section, and if such amounts appropriated do not exceed the amount appropriated for fiscal year 1990, the State education agency, at the discretion of such agency, may provide such grants.

(d) **FUNCTIONS OF THE OFFICE OF COORDINATOR.**--The Coordinator of Education of Homeless Children and Youth established in each State shall--

- (1) once every two years gather data on the number and location of homeless children and youth in the State, and such data gathering shall include the number of homeless children and homeless youths enrolled in schools in the State, determined through random sampling or other statistical methods that ensure that such children and youths are not overtly identified as being homeless, the nature and extent of problems of access to, and placement of, homeless children and homeless youth in elementary and secondary schools, the difficulties in identifying the special needs of such children, and any progress made by the State educational agency and local educational agencies within the State in addressing such problems and difficulties;

- (2) develop and carry out the State plan described in subsection (e);

- (3) prepare and submit to the Secretary not later than December 31, 1991, and on December 31 of every second year thereafter a report on the data gathered pursuant to paragraph (1);

To the extent that reliable current data is available in the State, each coordinator described in this subsection may use such data to fulfill the requirements of paragraph (1):

- (4) facilitate coordination between the State education agency, the State social services agency, and other agencies providing services to homeless children and youth and their families; and

- (5) develop relationships and coordinate with other relevant education, child development, or preschool programs and providers of services to homeless children, homeless families, and runaway and homeless youths (including domestic violence agencies, shelter operators, transitional housing facilities, runaway and homeless youth centers, and transitional living programs for homeless youths) in order to improve the provision of comprehensive services to homeless children and homeless youths and the families of such children and youths.

(e) **STATE PLAN.**--

- (1) Each State shall adopt a plan to provide for the education of each homeless child or homeless youth within the State which will contain provisions designed to--

- (A) authorize the State educational agency, the local educational agency, the parent or guardian of the homeless child, the homeless youth, or the applicable social worker to make the determinations required under this section;

(B) provide procedures for the prompt resolution of disputes regarding the educational placement of homeless children and youth;

(C) develop programs for school personnel (including principals, attendance officers, teachers, and enrollment personnel), to heighten the awareness of such personnel of the specific educational needs of runaway and homeless youths; and

(D) ensure that homeless children and homeless youths who meet the relevant eligibility criteria are able to participate in Federal, State, or local food programs;

(E) ensure that homeless children and homeless youths who meet the relevant eligibility criteria are able to participate in Federal, State, or local before- and after-school care programs and provide for the disclosure of data concerning the participation of such children in such programs in plans submitted by the State after the initial plan of the State;

(F) address problems set forth in the report provided to the Secretary under subsection (d)(3);

(G) address problems with respect to the education of homeless children and homeless youths including problems caused by

(i) transportation issues; and

(ii) enrollment delays which are caused by--

(I) immunization requirements;

(II) residency requirements;

(III) lack of birth certificates, school records, or other documentation; or

(IV) guardianship issues;

(H) demonstrate that the State and local educational agencies in the State have developed and will review and revise policies to remove barriers to the enrollment and retention of homeless children and homeless youths in schools of the State; and

(I) ensure that the State educational agency and local educational agencies within the State will adopt policies and practices to ensure that homeless children and homeless youths are not isolated or stigmatized.

(2) Each plan adopted under this subsection shall assure to the extent practicable under requirements relating to education established by State law, that local educational agencies within the State will comply with the requirements of paragraphs (3) through (9).

(3) (A) The local educational agency of each homeless child and each homeless youth shall either--

(i) continue the child's or youth's education in the school of origin

(I) for the remainder of the academic year; or

(II) in any case in which a family becomes homeless between academic years, for the following academic year; or

(ii) enroll the child or youth in any school that nonhomeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child or youth is actually living are eligible to attend;

whichever is in the child's best interest or the youth's best interest.

(B) In determining the best interests of the child or youth for purposes of making a school assignment under paragraph (A), consideration shall be given to a request made by a parent regarding school selection.

(C) For purposes of this paragraph, the term "school of origin" shall mean the school that the child or youth attended when permanently housed, or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled.

(4) The choice regarding placement shall be made regardless of whether the child or youth is living with the homeless parents or has been temporarily placed elsewhere by the parents.

(5) Each homeless child shall be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in the school selected according to the provisions of paragraph (3), including transportation services, educational services for which the child meets the eligibility criteria, such as compensatory educational programs for the disadvantaged, and educational programs for the handicapped and for students with limited English proficiency; programs in vocational education; programs for the gifted and talented; and school meal programs.

(6) Any record ordinarily kept by the school, including immunization records, academic records, birth certificates, guardianship records, and evaluations for special services or programs of each homeless child or youth shall be maintained--

(A) so that the records are available, in a timely fashion, when a child or youth enters a new school district; and

(B) in a manner consistent with section 438 of the General Education Provisions Act.

(7) Each local educational agency serving homeless children or youth that receives assistance under this title shall coordinate with local social service agencies, and other agencies or programs providing services to such children or youth and their families.

(8) Each local educational agency that receives assistance under this title shall designate a homelessness liaison to ensure that--

(A) homeless children and youth enroll and succeed in the schools of that agency; and

(B) homeless families, children and youth receive educational services for which they are eligible, and referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health services, and other appropriate services.

State coordinators and local educational agency liaisons shall inform school personnel, service providers and advocates working with homeless families of the duties of the liaisons.

(9) Each State and local educational agency shall review and revise any policies that may act as barriers to the enrollment of homeless children and youth in schools selected in accordance with paragraph (3). In reviewing and revising such policies, consideration shall be given to issues concerning transportation, requirements of immunization, residency, birth certificates, school records, or other documentation, and guardianship. Special attention shall be given to ensuring the enrollment and attendance of homeless children and youths who are not currently attending school.

(f) APPLICATION.--No State may receive a grant under this section unless the State educational agency submits an application to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and containing or accompanied by such information as the Secretary may reasonably require.

(g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.--

(1) There are authorized to be appropriated \$50,000,000 for fiscal year 1991, and such sums as may be necessary for each of the fiscal years 1992 and 1993.

(2) The State educational agency may reserve not to exceed 5 percent of the amount received by such agency under this section in each fiscal year, or an amount equal to the amount received by such State agency for State activities under this section in fiscal year 1990, whichever is greater, to conduct activities under paragraphs (1) through (5) of subsection (c).

(3) (A) In any fiscal year in which the amount appropriated under paragraph (1) does not equal or exceed \$100,000,000 the State educational agency shall use funds not otherwise reserved under paragraph (2) to award grants to local educational agencies in accordance with subsection (c)(6).

(B) In any fiscal year in which the amount appropriated under paragraph (1) equals or exceeds \$100,000,000, the State educational agency shall use funds not otherwise reserved under paragraph (2) to allocate to each local educational agency an amount that bears the same ratio to amount not otherwise reserved as the aggregate amount received by such local educational agency under part A of chapter 1 of title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 for such fiscal year bears to the aggregate amount received by all local educational agencies in the State for purposes of carrying out such part for such fiscal year.

(4) Sums appropriated in each fiscal year shall remain available for the succeeding fiscal year.

Section 723. Local Educational Agency Grants for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth.

(a) GENERAL AUTHORITY.--

(1) Grantees and purpose of grants.-- The State educational agency shall, in accordance with section 722(c)(6) and from amounts made available to such agency under section 722, make grants to local educational agencies for the purpose of facilitating the enrollment, attendance and success of homeless children and youths in schools.

(2) Use of grants.-- Unless otherwise specified, services under paragraph (1) may be provided through programs on school grounds or at other nonsectarian facilities. Where services are provided through programs on school grounds, such services may also be made available to children or youths who are determined by the local educational agency to be at risk of failing in or dropping out of schools, except that priority for such services shall be given to homeless children and homeless youths. To the maximum extent practicable, services shall be provided through existing programs and mechanisms that integrate homeless individuals with nonhomeless individuals.

(3) Regular academic program.-- Services provided under this section are not intended to replace the regular academic program.

(b) AUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES.--

(1) Primary activities.-- Not less than 50 percent of amounts provided under a grant under this section shall be used to provide tutoring, remedial education services, or other education services to homeless children or homeless youths.

(2) Related activities.-- Not less than 35, nor more than 50, percent of amounts provided under a grant under this section may be used for activities that may include--

(A) the provision of expedited evaluations of the strengths and needs of homeless children and homeless youths, including needs and eligibility for programs and services (including gifted and talented programs, special education programs, programs for students with limited English proficiency, and remedial services);

(B) professional development for educators and other school personnel that is designed to develop awareness and sensitivity to the needs of homeless children and homeless youths and the rights of such children and youths under this Act;

(C) the provision of referral services to homeless children and homeless youths for medical, dental, mental, and other health services;

(D) the provision of assistance to defray the excess cost of transportation for students not provided under section 722(e)(5) and not otherwise provided through Federal, State, or local funding, where necessary to enable students to attend the school selected under section 722 (e)(3);

(E) the provision of developmentally appropriate early childhood programs for preschool age children;

(F) the provision of before- and after-school and summer programs for homeless children or homeless youths in which a teacher or other qualified individual provides tutoring, homework assistance, and supervision of educational activities;

(G) where necessary, the payment of fees and other costs associated with tracking, obtaining, and transferring records necessary to enroll homeless children or homeless youths in school, including birth certificates, immunization records, academic records, guardianship records, and evaluations for special programs or services;

(H) the provision of parent education and training to the parents of homeless children and homeless youths about the rights of and resources available to such children and youths;

(I) the development of coordination between schools and agencies providing services to homeless children and homeless youths;

(J) the provision of counseling, social work and psychological services, including violence counseling, and referrals for such services;

(K) activities to address the particular needs of homeless children and homeless youths that may arise from domestic violence;

(L) activities to develop and implement programs for school personnel to heighten the awareness of such personnel of the specific educational needs of runaway and homeless youths;

(M) the adaptation of space and the purchase of supplies for nonschool facilities made available under subsection (a)(2) to provide services under this subsection;

(N) the provision of school supplies to be distributed at the shelter or temporary housing facilities; and

(O) the provision of such other extraordinary or emergency assistance determined by the Secretary as essential to enable homeless children and youth to attend school.

(3) Eligibility.-- No State or local educational agency may receive a grant under this section unless the State in which the agency is located has submitted a State plan as required by section 722(e).

(c) AWARDS.--

(1) Basis.-- Except as provided in section 722(g)(3)(B), from amounts appropriated for each fiscal year under section 722(g), the State educational agency may award grants under this section to local educational agencies submitting an application under subsection (d) on the basis of the need of such agencies.

(2) Determination.-- In determining need under paragraph (1), the State educational agency may consider the number of homeless children and homeless youth enrolled in preschool, elementary, and secondary schools within the area served by the agency, and shall consider the needs of such children and youth, and the ability of the agency to meet such needs. Such agency may also consider--

(A) the extent to which the proposed use of funds would facilitate the enrollment, retention, and educational success of homeless children and youth;

(B) the extent to which the application reflects coordination with other local and State agencies that serve homeless children and youth, as well as the State Plan required by section 722(e);

(C) the extent to which the applicant exhibits in the application and in current practice a commitment to education of all homeless children and youth in its jurisdiction; and

(D) other criteria as the agency determines appropriate.

(d) APPLICATION.--

(1) In general.-- A local educational agency that desires to receive a grant under this section shall submit an application to the State educational agency at such time, in such manner, and containing or accompanied by such information as the State agency may reasonably require according to guidelines issued by the Secretary. Each such application shall include--

(A) a description of the services and programs for which assistance is sought and the problems sought to be addressed through the provision of such services and programs;

(B) assurances that the applicant complies with or will use requested funds to come into compliance with paragraphs (3) through (9) of section 722(e);

(C) an assurance that assistance under the grant will supplement and not supplant funds used before the award of the grant for purposes of providing services to homeless children and homeless youths; and

(D) a description of policies and procedures that the agency will implement to ensure that activities carried out by the agency will not isolate or stigmatize homeless children and homeless youth.

(3)[sic] Term of Awards.-- Grants awarded under this section shall be for terms not to exceed 2 years.

(e) REPORTS.-- Each State educational agency that receives a grant under this section for any fiscal year shall, as part of the plan of the State submitted under section 722(c)(4), provide to Secretary data concerning--

(1) the number of homeless children and homeless youths served with assistance provided under the grant under this section; and

(2) a description of the success of the program under this section in allowing homeless children and homeless youths to enroll in, attend, and succeed in school.

Section 724. National Responsibilities

(a) GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE.-- The Comptroller General of the United States shall prepare and submit to the Congress not later than June 30, 1988, a report on the number of homeless children and youth in all States.

(b) SECRETARIAL RESPONSIBILITIES.--

(1) The Secretary shall monitor and review compliance with the provisions of this subtitle in accordance with the provisions of the General Education Provisions Act. In reviewing the State plans submitted by the State educational agencies under section 722(e), the Secretary shall evaluate whether State laws, policies, and practices described in such plans adequately address the problems of homeless children and homeless youth relating to access to education and placement as described in such plans.

(2) (A) The Secretary, in consultation with persons and organizations that are knowledgeable about the needs of homeless children and youth, shall, through the awarding of a grant, or through entering into a contract or cooperative agreement, conduct a study to determine the best means of identifying, locating, and counting homeless children and youth for the purposes of this subtitle. Such persons and organizations to be consulted shall include representatives of State coordinators, local educational agencies with substantial numbers of homeless children and youth, local government agencies with responsibility for administering homeless shelters, and advocacy groups representing the interests of homeless children and youth. The Secretary shall also consult with the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, as appropriate, in carrying out this paragraph.

(B) The study conducted under subparagraph (A) shall consider--

(i) the appropriate definition of the terms 'homeless child' and 'homeless youth';

(ii) the experience of the 1990 Census in identifying, locating, and counting homeless children and youth;

(iii) appropriate methodologies for identifying, locating, and counting such children and youth, including using schools, shelters, and other social service agencies to collect data; and

(iv) the projected accuracy of the methodologies identified in clause (iii), and the costs associated with the use of each methodology;

to determine the number of homeless children and youth in the United States to create as accurate an account as possible of the number, location, and living circumstances of such children and youth, including the number of such children and youth that are attending school regularly, part-time, or not at all, and reasons for the nonattendance of such children and youth.

(C) (i) Not later than 240 days after the date of enactment of this paragraph, the Secretary shall prepare and submit, to the appropriate committees of Congress, a report containing the results of the study conducted under subparagraph (A) and estimated costs of making the estimates required under clause (ii).

(ii) Not later than December 1, 1992, the Secretary, in consultation with the appropriate committees of Congress, and through the use of appropriate statistical methodology, shall, through a grant, contract or cooperative agreement, determine accurate estimates of the number of homeless children and youth throughout the Nation and the number of such children and youth attending school.

(D) The Secretary may reserve not more than \$250,000 from amounts appropriated under section 722(g) in 1991 to carry out the study required under subparagraph (A).

(E) There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary in 1992 to prepare the report and estimates required under subparagraph (C).

(3) The Secretary shall provide such support and technical assistance to the State educational agencies as is required by such agencies to carry out their responsibilities under this subtitle.

(4) The Secretary shall prepare and submit a report to the Congress on the programs and activities authorized by this subtitle at the end of each fiscal year.

(5) The Secretary shall compile and submit a report to the Congress containing the information received from the States pursuant to section 722(d)(3) within 45 days of its receipt.

(5) [sic] The Secretary shall conduct evaluation and dissemination activities of programs designed to meet the educational needs of homeless elementary and secondary school students.

(6) The Secretary shall require applications for grants under this subtitle to be submitted to the Secretary not later than the expiration of the 60-day period beginning on the date that funds are appropriated for purposes of making such grants and shall make such grants not later than the expiration of the 120-day period beginning on such date.

(7) The Secretary, based on the information received from the States and information gathered by the Secretary under paragraph (1), shall determine the extent to which State educational agencies are ensuring that each homeless child and homeless youth has access to a free appropriate education as described in section 721(1).

Section 725. Reports.

Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this subsection, the Comptroller General of the United States, in consultation with the Secretary, shall prepare and submit to the appropriate Committees of Congress a report containing the findings of a study conducted to determine the most effective method of distributing funds provided under this subtitle to State educational agencies and local educational agencies.

Section 726. Definitions.

As used in this subtitle--

- (1) the term "Secretary" means the Secretary of Education; and
- (2) the term "State" means each of the several States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The National Association of State Coordinators for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth applauds the courage, energy, and determination of the national leaders who have sought to identify and respond to the educational needs of homeless children and youth. Furthermore, we encourage a continued commitment to a hope for a better tomorrow for every child who is homeless today. We encourage and join in a full investment in all that is required to make a difference -- not just for a few, but for every homeless child and every homeless youth. In the face of incredible adversity, many of the children we have been privileged to serve have not given up hope. Neither shall we.